

## Emphasis

To emphasize means to give special importance or value to something in speaking or writing. It is something that people do quite often to convey what they mean. Fortunately, in English, it is possible to express emphasis through various ways. Let's see what these methods are:

- **Cleft Sentences: It**

Sentences introduced by 'It', like 'It is' or 'It was', are often used to emphasize a specific subject or object. The introductory clause is then followed by a relative pronoun.

*Examples:*

*It was I who received the promotion.*

*It is the awful weather that drives him crazy.*

- **Cleft Sentences: What**

Sentences introduced by a clause beginning with 'What' are also used to emphasize a specific subject or object. The clause introduced by 'What' is employed as the subject of the sentence as is followed by the verb 'to be'.

*Examples:*

*What we need is a good long shower.*

*What he thinks isn't necessarily true.*

- **Exceptional Use of 'Do' or 'Did'**

You have probably learned that the auxiliary verbs 'do' and 'did' are not used in positive sentences - for example, *He went to the store.* **NOT** *He did go to the store.* However, in order to emphasize something we feel strongly these auxiliary verbs can be used as an exception to the rule.

*Examples:*

*No that's not true. John did speak to Mary.*

*I do believe that you should think twice about this situation.*

Note this form is often used to express something contrary to what another person believes.

- **Inversion (Negative Adverbs)**

Invert the word order by placing a prepositional phrase or another expression (at no time, never, little, seldom, etc.) at the beginning of the sentence followed by inverted word order.

*Examples:*

*At no time did I say you couldn't come.*

*Hardly had I arrived when he started complaining.*

*Little did I understand what was happening.*

*Seldom have I felt so alone.*

Note that the auxiliary verb is placed before the subject which is followed by the main verb.

